Our efforts to help those affected by the recent wildfires continue. More on page 7

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DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER!

Now through the end of September, your gift to Food for People will double thanks to a $20,000 matching challenge from Craig Hansen and Hansen Insurance Services.

We feel it's important to keep you updated on our programs, policy work, and the progress we are making at the food bank. If you do not wish to receive a newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us and have your name removed from our newsletter mailing list.
Adapting to Changing Conditions
Notes from the Executive Director

As I was growing up, the “lazy days of summer” were always something to look forward to, with an extended break from school, vacation trips to the lake or the beach, time spent outside engaged in sports, picnics and barbecues with family and friends, and not having to worry about what it would take to get there.

Many families continue to enjoy those same summertime experiences, but must now plan more carefully to avoid areas affected by drought, extreme heat, and the threat of wildfires in order to keep their families safe.

Food for People and many of our partner organizations like Dream Quest, who recently pivoted from being a youth-serving organization to being a community resource for emergency supplies, have had to adapt to this new reality as well. We’ve always included disaster response as part of our service to community, but it was historically more conceptual as we talked about possible future earthquakes and tsunamis, and not necessarily as a reality as well. We’ve always included resources to feed extra people.

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And I have to say once again that our staff makes us so proud in their commitment to our mission even when working conditions are less than optimal. Robert Sataia is our Emergency and Community Response Coordinator, and he and our Community Outreach and Mobile Produce Pantry team have been on the front lines in the affected communities, backed up by our Operations and Food Sourcing staff who coordinate the logistics necessary to make it all happen, and Development and Communications staff who make sure the community knows we are there for them.

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Late summer volunteer opportunities
By Julie Ryan, Volunteer & Direct Services Manager

Summers are at Food for People are a bustle of volunteer activity. As the need for food assistance increases in response to the higher cost of living, the more opportunities there are for you to join in the variety of weekly and monthly projects. In the warehouse, Mondays can host up to a dozen volunteers between two projects: packing for the Children’s Summer Food Program and bagging produce for the Community Pantry and the Senior programs. As Eureka Choice Pantry, a small crew of volunteers start their Mondays assembling non-perishable bags that are part of the food allotment during our walk-up distributions.

Tuesdays and Fridays the Eureka warehouse hosts produce sorting, donation sorting, and other packing activities ready for distribution throughout the county. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, two to three volunteers are needed at each shift at the Eureka Choice Pantry to serve as many as 100 customers per day.

Each month through October, the Free Produce Market at Bayshore Mall’s north parking lot needs 12-15 volunteers to set up and then staff for-hour shifts. In this busy drive-thru distribution, other monthly projects include Senior & Homebound deliveries and special food distributions.

Summers means it is wildfire season in California and Food for People may need help with packing projects as we join community partners in disaster relief efforts. Summer is also fruit harvest time as fruit trees laden with ripe fruit and a handful of gleaners are needed to gather plums, apples, pears, and more into the fall.

Like a busy hive of bees, we keep buzzing and that makes summer a sweet time to volunteer at Food for People.

To volunteer, contact Julie Ryan at 707-445-3166 ext. 310 or volunteer@foodforpeople.org.

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Children's Summer Food Program helps children in rural areas of Humboldt County

Our Children's Summer Food Program has adapted to fit children's food needs during the pandemic. This program is an expanded version of the Backpacks for Kids program and has served 200 kids at six sites throughout Humboldt County this summer. These sites are located in the more rural areas of our county that often need some additional food support for qualifying families. Participating children receive a bag of kid-friendly, easy-to-prepare food, packed with enough food to supplement their meals for a week. Foods include a quart of milk, a jar of peanut butter, tuna, canned soups, canned beans, macaroni and cheese, granola bars, 100% fruit juice, and a bag of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Bridgeville Community Center is one of the sites that participates in the Children's Summer Food Program, to ensure that kids in their community do not go hungry when school is out. The Community Center is the main resource for locals to seek food support besides the school. It’s hard to imagine, but the local store in the area does not accept CalFresh/EBT, and the travel costs for grocery shopping on the coast are high, as most families are more than 20 to 60 miles from the nearest grocery store.

“Being able to supplement our families throughout the summer has proven beneficial for the children getting the sustenance they need and also reducing stress in the home,” says Danielle Howley, the Director at the Bridgeville Community Center. “We notice that when the participating children get back to school, they are better equipped for school—meaning, their parents have been able to manage their resources with a little less stress and provide their kids with the tools needed to be successful in school.”

Danielle says that her favorite part of participating in the program is “knowing that every week we are providing fresh fruits and vegetables for our local youth.” She further explains that “Out here grocery shopping is likely once a month, which means veggies are usually in a can, because they go bad after a week. Our efforts are giving healthy choices to our kids and a wide variety of fresh vegetables and fruits for parents and guardians to cook with.”

Trish Osley, the Director at Dream Quest, the youth center in Willow Creek, also really appreciates being able to participate in the program. They currently distribute about 30 bags of food each week. “Food for People’s Children’s Summer Food Program makes a huge difference for many families that are financially challenged to buy groceries. My grandchildren came to visit last month, and I realized that I had forgotten how much kids eat—especially teenagers.”

Trish says that having the extra food has noticeable positive benefits for the families she serves. She works with the “kids are happier and better able to perform when they are not dealing with food scarcity. Seeing their behavior when food scarcity is their normal can be heart-breaking.”

The goal of Food for People’s Child Nutrition Programs is to fill the meal gap for at-risk children in Humboldt County when school is unavailable. As the summer winds down we are now planning ahead to launch our Backpacks for Kids weekend hunger relief program for the school year. If you have any questions about our Child Nutrition Programs please call Carrie, our Child & Senior Programs Coordinator at 707-445-3166 extension 209 or email ChildNutrition@foodforpeople.org.

Next school year will be here before you know it and children in our community need your help. Backpacks for Kids provides a bag full of nutritious food for local kids on the weekends for the school year.

Children's Summer Food Program Helps Kids in Rural Areas of Humboldt County

By Carrie Smith, Child & Senior Programs Coordinator

Cypresses Grove Chevre

Rotary Club of Eureka

United Elusive of Northern California

Honey & Fig Summer

Milk, Female or P/F

Aircrate Sept. Day System

Horner Aquarines

Outdoor Land Line

George Neptune

Ocean Central Credit Union

Clara’s to Sholp

Atlanta & Dave Abel

Misti Wagner

Roy & Carol Aragon

Richard & Robin

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Time's tough in Humboldt County, as well as throughout the nation, as the rising cost of food, gas, and everyday living expenses are affecting us all. At Food for People, we have grown accustomed to adapting to meet shifting needs. The COVID pandemic increased the number of people experiencing hunger in Humboldt County. In 2019 — prior to the pandemic — 12,000 people were served monthly by Food for People. This number grew to 16,000 individuals monthly — and remained high in 2021. We adjusted our programs, expanded where we saw needs arise, and have kept a steady (and increased) level of service in the county. Now things are changing again. The average number of people seeking food assistance across all our programs has increased by 25% compared to last year’s monthly average, and the numbers are continuing to climb.

To meet the increased need, Food for People is working to build up the food offerings in our network of food pantries and programs, as well as add distributions to help affected areas. However, building up food offerings once again means we are running out of space—a story that has been all too common in our operations since the sewer disaster of 2020 that caused us to move out of our flagship building into multiple leased locations. This increased need for food assistance coupled with the recurring emergencies and natural disasters that plague our area—from wildfires and winter storms to the pandemic—has shed light on the importance of a strong emergency food network for our region. We are happy to say that with Food for People’s new building under construction, Humboldt County will soon have a brand new food bank facility to meet these needs.

Construction is well underway with exterior walls erected and the roof in progress, and we are on schedule for completion late this year. One of our key priorities when designing the building was to plan responsibly for the future, which is why we have built in adaptable space for disaster response resiliency. Not only will we have the space to store emergency foods, we will have backup power to ensure that when a disaster strikes the food bank can remain operational. The new facility will also transform and streamline Food for People’s operations. Not only will our staff be all under one roof again, eliminating our current transportation and logistics issues, but the added height and storage space will allow us to expand our services to ensure we can address the increasing food assistance needs of Humboldt County. With our longtime commitment to providing healthy food options to low-income community members, we will be adding more cold storage to allow us to store and prioritize more fresh produce.

In order to complete this project, we need to raise $6.1 million. Thankfully we have already received strong support from the community and local partners, collecting $3.95 million to date. One of our primary hopes now is to raise the remaining $1.500,000 needed to finish the project so we will not have to take on debt to complete it, especially with the increasingly high loan interest rates.

If you would like to help us close this gap and realize our goal, you can send a donation to us earmarked for the rebuild, or contact Carly Robbins, Development Director, at (707) 445-3166 ext. 306 or crobbins@foodforpeople.org.

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State Budget Act Addresses Poverty and Hunger
By Heidi McHugh, CalFresh Outreach & Policy Advocacy Coordinator

The 2022 California Budget Act was signed by Governor Newsom on June 30, 2022. Food banks and anti-poverty advocates are encouraged by these significant investments that will reduce hunger, poverty, and inequality. As the economy recovers, more than 20% of Californians report being food insecure. The commitment to funding food banks, school meals, Supplemental Security Income, and addressing inequity in resource access will improve the quality of life for all Californians. Below are the highlights that pertain to these issues.

- $120 million one-time allocation for CalFood. These funds allow food banks to purchase California-produced foods to be distributed at food pantries.

- Over $2 billion to implement School Meals for All. This includes funding for increased school kitchen infrastructure, enhance school food procurement, and related school meal investments.

- Expansion of the California Food Assistance Program to Californians age 55+ regardless of immigration status.

- Acceleration of child support payments to receive all of it and not have it assessed debt that accrued prior to the change in the law.

- A significant increase to CalWORKs grants by 21% – the biggest increase in the program's history.

- A change in child support policy allowing families that receive child support payments to receive all of it and not have redirected to the government.

- Over $200 million to ensure access to reproductive health care.

- Expansion of health coverage to low-income undocumented immigrants of all ages.

- A reduction of civil assessment fees from $300 to $100, and discharge of civil assessment debt that accrued prior to the change in the law.

- A change in tax intercept policy stopping the government from intercepting the Earned Income Tax Credit and Young Child Tax Credit for unpaid debts.

- $100 million for HOPE (Hope, Opportunity, Perseverance, and Empowerment) accounts, which will benefit low-income children who have lost a parent or guardian to COVID-19, and children in long-term foster care.

- $9.5 billion in tax rebates for tax filers, including social security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) grant increases from January 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024 (which in combination with the expected Federal Cost of Living Adjustment will increase SSI/SSP rates by approximately $107 per month). Nearly half of the people who visit Food for People’s pantries and distributions receive SSI.

- Establishment of the Tribal Nutrition Assistance Program, which will award grants to tribes and tribal organizations to address food insecurity and inequities between CalFresh and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), TDPIR participants are ineligible to receive SNAPCalFresh.

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An increasing number of people have been accessing our food pantries this summer as we watch inflation, gas prices, and food prices rise across the country. At our Eureka Choice Pantry, the number of people seeking services has grown by more than 45% compared to the average last year and is continuing to climb. The group access to food for low-income people is a concern. “Not just new people, but people who have never visited a service like this before,” says Erin Tharp, coordinator of the Choice Pantry. When it comes to making new visitors feel welcome, Erin focuses on the importance of a positive first impression. “I try to keep that in the forefront of everything we do, because if you ask for help and are made to feel bad, you’re not going to come back, and you’re not going to get the help you need.”

The team at the Eureka Choice Pantry does its best to cater to all people who seek services, regardless of dietary needs or living situations. “We have vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options, as well as no-cook bags. There are a lot of people who are in some kind of transitional living space, so we have bags that have things like peanut butter, crackers and chips, canned chicken and tuna, canned fruit, and granola bars—Things you can eat directly out of the package. There are several program participants I know that have dietary restrictions, and when I see them I will pull out whatever box of options I know they will like. These bags are customizations together with the pantry to know, Erin responded by saying, “I want new visitors to know that one here is going to judge you. I see everyone just as members of my community. Don’t see anyone who is less-than because they need help. That’s not what it is. The stigma exists in the world, no matter what we do, but at our pantries, no one is here to judge you. We are Food for People. It’s that simple.”

We provide a diverse range of foods to suit all dietary needs.

Give in the name of a loved one

You can honor a friend or family member by making a donation to Food for People. Simply add a notation to your gift. If you include an address, we’ll send a card to let that person know about the donation. It is a great way to celebrate and/or honor the memory of someone you love.
Our newest Senior Delivery site is at the Lodge housing complex in Eureka.

New Senior Delivery at the Lodge
Senior Home & Programs Expand
By Carrie Smith, Senior & Programs Coordinator

Food for People’s Senior and Homebound Programs address the negative health impacts of food insecurity and social isolation often experienced by seniors in our community. One of the programs we operate is the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) which works to improve the health of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious foods. Starting in June, we began delivering food to the doorsteps of community members located at The Lodge in Eureka. The food we deliver includes a box full of nonperishable foods, and a bag of fresh foods such as eggs, milk, cheese, frozen meat or fish, fresh produce, and bread. Many of the residents at The Lodge regularly visited our other locations in the Eureka area. One of our goals in establishing The Lodge as a new site in our Senior and Homebound Programs is to get food to income-qualified seniors in a reliable and consistent manner. We are also hoping to grow the site there amongst other senior residents who may benefit but are not currently aware of services or able to travel to one of our other sites.

The Lodge at Eureka is a 50-unit affordable housing complex for seniors and folks with disabilities, featuring studios, and one and two-bedroom apartments. Managed by the Danco Group, it includes on-site management, a large community room, an exercise room, and laundry facilities. To be eligible to live at the Lodge at Eureka, you must be at least 62 years old and meet certain income-level restrictions. Income levels are measured as a percentage of AMI, the county’s Area Median Income. Tenants must have an income level at or below a certain percentage of AMI for the corresponding family size.

If interested in the CSFP Program, please call Carrie, our Senior & Programs Coordinator, at 707-445-3166 extension 309 or email seniors@foodforpeople.org.

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Free Produce Markets
By Robert Sataua, Emergency Food Response Coordinator

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cabbage, spinach, and lettuce. We never know exactly what we will have access to from month to month but tend to have foods that cannot be grown on the coast as easily, like corn and melons, which are always received with open arms.

With the growth of these distributions, we have had to adjust our systems to get people through the long lines quicker. When we recognized that cars were waiting over an hour to get their food in Eureka we knew a different model was needed to avoid people using a lot of costly gas to access food. By creating a more efficient loading system and recruiting more volunteers, we’ve managed to cut the wait time down to 25-45 minutes, and that was a welcomed change for all parties.

We could not have had the success that we’ve had without our dedicated team of volunteers. At each Free Produce Market Site, hardworking volunteers are critical to the distribution’s success. Some volunteers have been with us for more than 10 years. These volunteers offer their keen perspective and play a big role in identifying efficiency opportunities. In addition, Uplift Eureka and C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team) have contributed their time and energy ensuring the distributions run smoothly. The efforts pay off when we see participants overjoyed and grateful for the foods as they drive through. If you would like more information on our season Free Produce Markets www.foodforpeople.org/programs/free-produce-markets.

Farmer Spotlight
Ben and Aubrey - Fair Curve Farm
By Allison Kenney, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Fair Curve Farm was started in 2017 by Aubrey and Ben Thompson. The pair met in college, working on other local farms, and each month, we feature a new farms trying their luck selling produce at the bustling Saturday Arcata Farmer’s Market. Food for People first met Fair Curve Farm at their stand at the Henderson Center Farmers’ Market on Thursdays in Eureka and was impressed with their vibrant produce display. Most days, Ben and Aubrey grew, harvested, and delivered the fresh crops to local restaurants and grocery stores.

Fair Curve Farm was started in 2017 by Aubrey and Ben Thompson. The pair met in college, working on other local farms, and the farmers utilize the funds to invest in the farm. In turn, farmers are entitled to the farm’s harvests as they become available. Ben and Aubrey, like all CSA farmers, are always striving to choose what produce they get as their “share” by shopping at the farm stand, rather than receiving a predetermined weekly box typically chosen by the farmer (and traditionally how many CSAs are run). Having freedom of choice in what we eat is very important to Ben and Aubrey, and offering a free-choice CSA share ensures that their clients are truly choosing and using the produce they want and need.

Food for People first met Fair Curve Farm at their stand at the Henderson Center Farmers’ Market on Thursdays in Eureka and was impressed with their vibrant produce display. Most days, Ben and Aubrey grew, harvested, and delivered the fresh crops to local restaurants and grocery stores.

In addition to the produce we get from our partners in the Central Valley, we are now buying additional foods to ensure we have enough produce for everyone. We try to bring staples like onions, potatoes, carrots, and celery that are hardy enough to last a couple of weeks and often have a variety of greens, like

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New Food Pantry Serving the Community of Blocksburg
By Nora Lovell, Pantry Network Coordinator

Food for People’s Pantry Network now consists of 18 pantries and 3 congregate meal programs throughout Humboldt County thanks to key community partners. Our newest pantry site is located in Blocksburg, 30 minutes south of Bridgeville. It is operated by the Bridgeville Community Center, which started distributing food in Blocksburg in July 2022.

The Bridgeville Community Center operates three different pantry sites—more than any of our other pantry partners. Their original pantry site is located at the Bridgeville Community Center, directly next to Bridgeville Elementary School. Then they added a mobile distribution in Dinsmore, to better serve those who are farther out on Highway 36. Their new mobile distribution in Blocksburg is set up at the Blocksburg Town Hall. The Bridgeville Community Center also participates in Food for People’s Senior Brown Bag, Backpacks for Kids, and Children’s Summer Food programs. With close ties on their campus, the Center’s relationship with our children’s programs ensures that students at Bridgeville Elementary School are fed during the weekends and summers when school meals are not provided.

In addition to these programs, the Bridgeville Community Center hosts a number of their own programs. They host a community potluck every month, as well as monthly vaccine clinics, bi-monthly exercise classes, and community holiday dinners. They are also the umbrella agency for the local Fire Safe Council and Two Rivers Community Care Group.

The Bridgeville Community Center is looking forward to engaging our community with upcoming parenting classes, substance abuse support groups, a wide array of other support groups, and group counseling. They also work closely with the school to assist in engaging programs such as “Art Club” during the After School Program.

The Bridgeville Community Center relies on hardworking volunteers. They have five committed volunteers who help with their pantry needs every month, including making the food bags, driving the van, and passing out food to their local community members. The Bridgeville volunteers love working at the pantry distribution and taking the time to get to know individuals and families. It is through their efforts that the Bridgeville Community Center is able to serve an average of 55 households every month through just their Bridgeville and Dinsmore locations, and they are now expanding their reach further with the new Blocksburg location. This is an exciting new step in being able to better serve our more rural community members.

If you are in the area, stop by the Bridgeville Community Center and check out all they have to offer!

Thank you to our Sponsors!

Mission. Food for People is working to eliminate hunger and improve the health and well-being of our community through access to healthy and nutritious foods, community education, and advocacy.

Vision. We envision a community where everyone has access to good quality, nutritious food, understands the consequences of hunger and poor nutrition, and is committed to creating a stronger, healthier Humboldt County.

More. For more information on Food for People and our countywide hunger relief programs or for ways you can get involved visit www.foodforpeople.org.